Print

#### **CASE INFORMATION**

#### CV-20-937000 MICHAEL SHIELDS vs. SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

#### **Docket Information**

Filing Date	Docker Party	t Docke Type	<sup>t</sup> Docket Description	View Image
10/07/2020	N/A	SR	USPS RECEIPT NO. 42599423 DELIVERED BY USPS 09/28/2020 SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA PROCESSED BY COC 10/07/2020.	
10/06/2020	N/A	JE	DEFENDANTS' CONSENTED MOTION FOR ENLARGEMENT OF TIME, FILED	
1			10/05/2020, IS GRANTED. DEFENDANTS SHALL MOVE, ANSWER, OR OTHERWISE PLEAD TO PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT ON OR BEFORE 11/12/2020. CMC BY PHONE SET FOR 11/17/2020 AT 10:45 AM. PLAINTIFF'S COUNSEL SHALL INITIATE THE	
			CONFERENCE CALL WITH ALL OTHER PARTIES AND CONTACT THE COURT AT THE SET TIME. THE COURT'S STAFF ATTORNEY CAN BE REACHED AT (216) 443-8619. PARTIES SHALL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS DISCOVERY PROGRESS AND SCHEDULING MATTERS, ETC. NOTICE ISSUED	
10/05/2020	D	МО	MOTION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME DEFENDANTS' CONSENTED MOTION FOR ENLARGEMENT OF TIME 10/06/2020 - GRANTED	
10/01/2020	D	NT	NOTICE OF APPEARANCE, FILED DEFENDANT(S) SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA(D1) and ERIC LUNDGREN(D2) GREGORY GUERVARA 0067269. APPEARANCE	
09/23/2020	N/A	SR	USPS RECEIPT NO. 42510792 DELIVERED BY USPS 09/14/2020 LUNDGREN/ERIC/PROCESSED BY COC 09/23/2020.	
09/22/2020	D1	SR	CERTIFIED MAIL RECEIPT NO. 42510791 RETURNED 09/22/2020 FAILURE OF SERVICE ON DEFENDANT SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA - ATTEMPTED NOT KNOWN NOTICE MAILED TO PLAINTIFF(S) ATTORNEY	
09/21/2020	N/A	SR	SUMMONS E-FILE COPY COST	
09/21/2020	D1	CS	WRIT FEE	
09/21/2020	D1	SR	SUMS COMPLAINT(42599423) SENT BY CERTIFIED MAIL. TO: SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA 10100 SMC BLVD NOBLESVILLE, IN 46060-0000	
09/21/2020	P1	SR	PRAECIPE FILED SECOND AMENDED INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE	
09/20/2020	N/A	SR	CERTIFIED MAIL RECEIPT NO. 42557682 RETURNED 9/19/2020 FAILURE OF SERVICE ON DEFENDANT SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA - ATTEMPTED NOT KNOWN NOTICE MAILED TO PLAINTIFF(S) ATTORNEY	_
09/15/2020	N/A	SR	SUMMONS E-FILE COPY COST	
09/15/2020	D1	CS	WRIT FEE	
09/15/2020	D1	SR	SUMS COMPLAINT(42557682) SENT BY CERTIFIED MAIL. TO: SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA C/O CT CORPORATION SYSTEM, ITS SA 36 PENNSYLVANIA STREET INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204-0000	
09/15/2020	P1	SR	PRAECIPE FILED AMENDED INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE OF COMPLAINT	
09/15/2020	N/A	SR	CERTIFIED MAIL RECEIPT NO. 42510791 RETURNED 9/14/2020 FAILURE OF SERVICE ON DEFENDANT SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA - OTHER REASON NOTICE MAILED TO PLAINTIFF(S) ATTORNEY	_
09/09/2020	N/A	SR	SUMMONS E-FILE COPY COST	
09/09/2020	N/A	SR	SUMMONS E-FILE COPY COST	
09/09/2020	D2	CS	WRIT FEE	
09/09/2020	D2	SR	SUMS COMPLAINT(42510792) SENT BY CERTIFIED MAIL. TO: ERIC LUNDGREN 6541 CITY WEST PARKWAY EDEN PRAIRIE, MN 55344	
09/09/2020	D1	CS	WRIT FEE	
09/09/2020	D1	SR	SUMS COMPLAINT(42510791) SENT BY CERTIFIED MAIL. TO: SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA 36 PENNSYLVANIA STREET INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204	
09/09/2020	N/A	SF	JUDGE DANIEL GAUL ASSIGNED (RANDOM)	

#### Case: 1:20-cv-02348-PAB Doc #: 1-1 Filed: 10/15/20 2 of 45. PageID #: 5

09/09/2020	Ρ1	SF	LEGAL RESEARCH
09/09/2020	P1	SF	LEGAL NEWS
09/09/2020	P1	SF	LEGAL AID
09/09/2020	P1	SF	COURT SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND
09/09/2020	P1	SF	COMPUTER FEE
09/09/2020	P1	SF	CLERK'S FEE
09/09/2020	P1	SF	DEPOSIT AMOUNT PAID J. MICHAEL MURRAY
09/09/2020	N/A	SF	CASE FILED: COMPLAINT, SERVICE REQUEST



Only the official court records available from the Cuyahoga County Clerk of Courts, available in person, should be relied upon as accurate and current.

Website Questions or Comments.

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#### NAILAH K. BYRD CUYAHOGA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS 1200 Ontario Street Cleveland, Ohio 44113

**Court of Common Pleas** 

New Case Electronically Filed: COMPLAINT September 9, 2020 12:38

By: J. MICHAEL MURRAY 0019626

Confirmation Nbr. 2068446

MICHAEL SHIELDS

CV 20 937000

VS.

Judge: DANIEL GAUL

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

#### IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

MICHAEL SHIELDS	) CASE NO.:
23334 S. Melrose Dr.	)
Westlake, Ohio 44145	) ) JUDGE:
Plaintiff,	) )
VS.	
	) <u>COMPLAINT</u>
SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA	) (HIDY DEMAND ENDODGED HEDEON)
c/o CT, its Statutory Agent	) (JURY DEMAND ENDORSED HEREON)
36 Pennsylvania St. Indianapolis, Indiana 46204	)
and	
ERIC LUNDGREN	)
SMC Corp. of America, Minneapolis Branch	)
6541 City West Parkway Eden	)
Prairie, MN 55344	)
	)
Defendants.	

#### INTRODUCTION

1. This is an age discrimination action arising from Defendants' unlawful termination of Plaintiff's employment on April 10, 2020. This action is being brought pursuant to R.C. §4112.02(L).

#### **PARTIES**

2. Plaintiff Michael Shields is 67 years old. Until April 10, 2020, Plaintiff was employed as a Corporate Account Manager in the Cleveland branch of Defendant SMC Corporation of America. Plaintiff was an employee as defined by § 4112.01(A)(3), Ohio Rev. Code.

- 3. Defendant SMC Corporation of America ("SMC") is a for-profit corporation with its principal place of business located at 10100 SMC Boulevard, Noblesville, IN, 46060.

  Defendant SMC is an employer as defined by § 4112.01(A)(2), Ohio Rev. Code.
- 4. Defendant Eric Lundren is an individual and a resident of the State of Minnesota.

  Defendant Lundgren is employed as a Regional Sales Manager by Defendant SMC and is also an employer as defined by § 4112.01(A)(2), Ohio Rev. Code.

#### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 5. Defendants transact business in this state and caused injury to Plaintiff in this state.

  This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendants based on, but not limited to,

  Ohio's Long Arm Statute, R.C. § 2307.382(A)(1),(3),(4) and Ohio R. Civ. P.

  4.3(A)(1),(3),(4).
- 6. Plaintiff's claims arose in Cuyahoga County, he resides in Cuyahoga County and Defendants are nonresidents of the State of Ohio. Venue is, therefore, proper in Cuyahoga County.

#### **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

- Defendant SMC is the United States subsidiary of SMC Corporation based in Japan.
   It provides industries with technology and products to support automation.
- 8. In 2005, Plaintiff first began his employment with Defendant SMC as an account manager in its Cleveland branch.
- 9. After six successful years, Plaintiff left Defendant SMC to pursue other opportunities in 2011.
- 10. Two years later, Plaintiff returned to SMC as an employee. More specifically,

Plaintiff accepted the position of Global Target Account Manager. That position came with more responsibilities than Plaintiff's previous role with the company, and placed a greater emphasis on client interaction and business development.

#### Plaintiff's Role and Performance

- In 2017, Defendant SMC designated Plaintiff to serve as one of two Corporate
   Account Managers for the Cleveland branch.
- 12. In or around April of 2018, the other Corporate Account Manager left SMC and Plaintiff began to serve as the only Corporate Account Manager for the Cleveland branch.
- 13. Plaintiff was a loyal employee and performed his duties well for years and continued to be highly qualified for his position.

#### Defendants' Discriminatory Treatment

- 14. In or around November of 2019, SMC hired a new employee as another Corporate Account Manager within the Cleveland branch. At that time, the new employee was 34 years old. Plaintiff, on the other hand, was 66 years old and was the oldest employee within the Cleveland branch.
- 15. On April 10, 2020, three months before his 67th birthday, while he was working from home in Westlake, OH, Plaintiff received a phone call from Defendant Eric Lundgren. Defendant Lundgren is a Regional Sales Manager for Defendant SMC and his responsibilities include overseeing the Cleveland branch.
- 16. Defendant Lundgren informed Plaintiff that he was being terminated immediately as a result of the economic condition of SMC that he attributed to COVID-19.

- 17. Hours later, two of Defendant SMC's employees went to Plaintiff's home and repossessed his corporate car, cell phone, laptop, gas card and credit card.
- 18. Defendant SMC offered Plaintiff only one week's severance pay upon his termination. It then presented him with a written release agreement providing that if he agreed to release all claims he had against SMC, it would pay him two weeks severance. Plaintiff declined that offer.
- 19. Attached to the written release agreement Defendant SMC provided to Plaintiff was a list of employees who were also being terminated as a result of the alleged economic circumstances caused by COVID-19.
- 20. Of the 28 employees in the Cleveland branch, only Plaintiff, who was the oldest member of the branch, and a Business Development Manager, who, at age 63, was the second oldest person in the Branch, were fired.
- 21. On the list of employees who were not terminated was the 34 year old Corporate

  Account Manager, who had been hired just some five months earlier.

#### UNLAWFUL AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT UNDER R.C. §4112.02

- 22. Plaintiff incorporates all previous allegations.
- 23. Plaintiff was more than 40 years of age at all times relevant to the allegations in this Complaint.
- 24. Plaintiff was qualified for his position and capable of performing his job duties.
- 25. Defendants SMC and Lundgren terminated Plaintiff because of his age on April 10,2020.
- 26. Defendant SMC and Lundgren assigned the duties that formerly belonged to Plaintiff

- to a younger employee or employees.
- 27. Defendants SMC and Lundgren discriminated against Plaintiff because of his age with respect to the terms, conditions and privileges of his employment, including but not limited to terminating his employment in violation of §§ 4112.02 and 4112.99, Ohio Rev. Code.
- As a direct and proximate result of the wrongful conduct of Defendants SMC and Lundgren, Plaintiff suffered and will continue to suffer economic and non-economic harms and damages for which Defendants are liable, including but not limited to emotional pain and suffering, humiliation, embarrassment, loss of enjoyment of life and the loss of past and future wages, fringe benefits and other privileges and conditions of employment.
- 29. Defendants SMC and Lundgren intentionally, willfully, wantonly, recklessly, and maliciously violated Plaintiff's rights under §§ 4112.02 and 4112.99, Ohio Revised Code for which Defendants are liable for punitive damages, attorney's and expert fees, costs, interest, and any equitable relief that this Court deems appropriate.

#### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Plaintiff demands the following relief against Defendants:

- Judgment in his favor awarding compensatory damages, jointly and severally, in excess of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars;
- Judgment in his favor awarding punitive damages, jointly and severally, in excess of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars;
- 3. Judgment in his favor awarding him back pay, front pay, prejudgment interest,

reasonable attorneys' and expert fees, and costs, jointly and severally;

4. Such other further legal and equitable relief to which Plaintiff is entitled.

#### **JURY DEMAND**

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all issues within this Complaint.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ J. Michael Murray

J. MICHAEL MURRAY (0019626)
jmmurray@bgmdlaw.com
WILLIAM C. LIVINGSTON (0089538)
wlivingston@bgmdlaw.com
BERKMAN, GORDON, MURRAY & DEVAN
55 Public Square, Suite 2200
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1949
Telephone: (216) 781-5245
Facsimile: (216) 781-8207

Attorneys for Plaintiff



# NAILAH K, BYRD CUYAHOGA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS 1200 Ontario Street Cleveland, Ohio 44113

#### **Court of Common Pleas**

New Case Electronically Filed: SERVICE REQUEST September 9, 2020 12:38

By: J. MICHAEL MURRAY 0019626

Confirmation Nbr. 2068446

MICHAEL SHIELDS CV 20 937000

vs.

Judge: DANIEL GAUL SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

Case: 1:20-cv-02348-PAB Doc #: 1-1 Filed: 10/15/20 11 of 45. PageID #: 14



## Common Pleas Court of Cuyahoga County, Ohio Nailah K. Byrd, Clerk of Courts

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE**

MICHAEL SHIELDS	Case Number
Plaintiff(s)	
	Judge:
Vs.	Comtombay 0, 0000
SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.	Date: September 9, 2020
Defendants(s)	
2	
Method of Service Requested:	
Certified Mail Service Ordinary Mail S	ervice Federal Express Service
Personal Service by the Sheriff of	County
Residence Service by the Sheriff of	County
Personal Service By Process Server	
Residence Service by Process Server	-1
Civ.R. 4.7 Waiver Requested	
Name(s) and Address(es) of Parties to Se	rve:
SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA	ERIC LUNDREN
C/O CT, its Statutory Agent	SMC Corp. of America, Minneapolis Branch
36 Pennsylvania St.	6541 City West Parkway Eden
Indianapolis, IN 46204	Prairie, MN 55344
Additional Instructions:	
L Michael Murray	
Filing Party Name: J. Michael Murray Sup	preme Court ID if applicable: 0019626
Phone Number: <u>216-781-5245</u>	
Thore ramber.	
For the by Shoriff or Propose Server Only	
For Use by Sheriff or Process Server Only	
ENUMBRIANT FREE 69.05/2020 F2:38 / / CV 20 937	<del>7000 / Co</del> nfirmation Nbr. 2068446 / CLAJB
Address for Service if Different from address	included above:
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### SUMMONS IN A CPAREA C.PONV-0204R TPARCOMMENT PLEASE CULAHO COUNTY SIUS PROPRIO EN LE RECEVELAND, OHIO 44113

CASE NO. CV20937000

D1 CM

SUMMONS NO. 42510791

Rule 4 (B) Ohio

Rules of Civil Procedure

MICHAEL SHIELDS

vs

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

DEFENDANT

PLAINTIFF

**SUMMONS** 

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA C/O CT, ITS STATUTORY AGENT 36 PENNSYLVANIA STREET INDIANAPOLIS IN 46204

Said answer is required to be served on:



Plantiff's Attorney

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON 55 PUBLIC SQ. STE. 2200

CLEVELAND, OH 44113-0000

Case has been assigned to Judge:

DANIEL GAUL

Do not contact judge. Judge's name is given for attorney's reference only.

You have been named defendant in a sums complaint (copy attached hereto) filed in Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas, Cuyahoga County Justice Center, Cleveland, Ohio 44113, by the plaintiff named herein.

You are hereby summoned and required to answer the complaint within 28 days after service of this summons upon you, exclusive of the day of service.

Said answer is required to be served on Plaintiff's Attorney (Address denoted by arrow at left.)

Your answer must also be filed with the court within 3 days after service of said answer on plaintiff's attorney.

If you fail to do so, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

OF COUNTY OF STREET OF STR

NAILAH K. BYRD Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas

DATE SENT Sep 19, 2020

By\_\_\_\_

Deputy

les to ranger.

COMPLAINT FILED 09/09/2020



11



#### SUMMONS IN A CONSEACTIONV-COOKINFONECOMMON PLETABLICULATION COUNTIAS JURISIDENCE DENTER

CASE NO. CV20937000

D2 CM

SUMMONS NO. 42510792

**CLEVELAND, OHIO 44113** 

Rule 4 (B) Ohio

Rules of Civil Procedure

MICHAEL SHIELDS

VS

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

DEFENDANT

PLAINTIFF

**SUMMONS** 

ERIC LUNDGREN SMC CORP OF AMERICA, MINNEAPOLIS BRANCH 6541 CITY WEST PARKWAY EDEN PRAIRIE MN 55344

Said answer is required to be served on:



#### Plantiff's Attorney

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON 55 PUBLIC SQ. STE. 2200

CLEVELAND, OH 44113-0000

Case has been assigned to Judge:

DANIEL GAUL

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Said answer is required to be served on Plaintiff's Attorney (Address denoted by arrow at left.)

Your answer must also be filed with the court within 3 days after service of said answer on plaintiff's attorney.

If you fail to do so, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

NAILAH K. BYRD Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas

DATE SENT Sep 9, 2020

By\_

Deputy

Wito Burning

COMPLAINT FILED 09/09/2020



Date Produced: 09/21/2020

#### **CERTIFIED MAIL SOLUTIONS INC.:**

The following is the delivery information for Certified Mail™/RRE item number 9314 8001 1300 3540 6578 59. Our records indicate that this item was delivered on 09/14/2020 at 11:00 a.m. in EDEN PRAIRIE, MN 55344. The scanned image of the recipient information is provided below.

Signature of Recipient :	ignature X	AC	The second
	Printed Name	404	* 1
Address of Recipient :	Delivery Address	(19	

Thank you for selecting the Postal Service for your mailing needs. If you require additional assistance, please contact your local post office or Postal Service representative.

Sincerely, United States Postal Service

The customer reference number shown below is not validated or endorsed by the United States Postal Service. It is solely for customer use.

Case: 1:20-cv-02348-PAB Doc #: 1-1 Filed: 10/15/20 16 of 45. PageID #: 19





# NAILAH K. BYRD CUYAHOGA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS 1200 Ontario Street Cleveland, Ohio 44113

**Court of Common Pleas** 

PRAECIPE September 15, 2020 13:43

By: WILLIAM LIVINGSTON 0089538

Confirmation Nbr. 2072998

MICHAEL SHIELDS

CV 20 937000

vs.

Judge: DANIEL GAUL

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

Case: 1:20-cv-02348-PAB Doc #: 1-1 Filed: 10/15/20 17 of 45. PageID #: 20



#### Common Pleas Court of Cuyahoga County, Ohio Nailah K. Byrd, Clerk of Courts

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE**

MICHAEL SHIELDS	Case Number CV-20-937000
Plaintiff(s)	
8	Judge: Daniel Gaul
Vs.	Sontember 15, 2020
SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.	Date: September 15, 2020
Defendants(s)	
Method of Service Requested:	
Certified Mail Service Ordinary Ma	il Service Federal Express Service
Personal Service by the Sheriff of	County
Residence Service by the Sheriff of	County
Personal Service By Process Server	<del></del>
Residence Service by Process Server	
Civ.R. 4.7 Waiver Requested	
Name(s) and Address(es) of Parties to	Serve:
SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA	
C/O CT Corporation System, its Statut	tory Agent
36 S. Pennsylvania St.	ory Agent
Indianapolis, IN 46204	
A delition of the strength of the	
Additional Instructions:	
The State of Michael Murray	0019626
Filing Party Name: J. Michael Murray	Supreme Court ID if applicable: 0019626
Phone Number: 216-781-5245	
For Use by Sheriff or Process Server Only	
Number of Service Attempts:	-
Address for Service If Different from add	dress included above:
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# NAILAH K. BYRD CUYAHOGA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS 1200 Ontario Street Cleveland, Ohio 44113

#### **Court of Common Pleas**

New Case Electronically Filed: COMPLAINT September 9, 2020 12:38

By: J. MICHAEL MURRAY 0019626

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MICHAEL SHIELDS

CV 20 937000

vs.

Judge: DANIEL GAUL

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

#### IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

MICHAEL SHIELDS	) CASE NO.:
23334 S. Melrose Dr.	)
Westlake, Ohio 44145	)
Plaintiff,	) JUDGE: )
vs.	j
	) ) <u>COMPLAINT</u>
SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA	)
c/o CT, its Statutory Agent	) (JURY DEMAND ENDORSED HEREON)
36 Pennsylvania St.	)
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204	
* '	)
and	)
	ý
ERIC LUNDGREN	ý
SMC Corp. of America, Minneapolis Branch	)
6541 City West Parkway Eden	ý
Prairie, MN 55344	Í
Training Train 300-11-1	)
Defendants.	)

#### INTRODUCTION

1. This is an age discrimination action arising from Defendants' unlawful termination of Plaintiff's employment on April 10, 2020. This action is being brought pursuant to R.C. §4112.02(L).

#### **PARTIES**

2. Plaintiff Michael Shields is 67 years old. Until April 10, 2020, Plaintiff was employed as a Corporate Account Manager in the Cleveland branch of Defendant SMC Corporation of America. Plaintiff was an employee as defined by § 4112.01(A)(3), Ohio Rev. Code.

- 3. Defendant SMC Corporation of America ("SMC") is a for-profit corporation with its principal place of business located at 10100 SMC Boulevard, Noblesville, IN, 46060.

  Defendant SMC is an employer as defined by § 4112.01(A)(2), Ohio Rev. Code.
- 4. Defendant Eric Lundren is an individual and a resident of the State of Minnesota.

  Defendant Lundgren is employed as a Regional Sales Manager by Defendant SMC and is also an employer as defined by § 4112.01(A)(2), Ohio Rev. Code.

#### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

- 5. Defendants transact business in this state and caused injury to Plaintiff in this state.

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  Ohio's Long Arm Statute, R.C. § 2307.382(A)(1),(3),(4) and Ohio R. Civ. P.

  4.3(A)(1),(3),(4).
- 6. Plaintiff's claims arose in Cuyahoga County, he resides in Cuyahoga County and Defendants are nonresidents of the State of Ohio. Venue is, therefore, proper in Cuyahoga County.

#### **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

- Defendant SMC is the United States subsidiary of SMC Corporation based in Japan.
   It provides industries with technology and products to support automation.
- 8. In 2005, Plaintiff first began his employment with Defendant SMC as an account manager in its Cleveland branch.
- 9. After six successful years, Plaintiff left Defendant SMC to pursue other opportunities in 2011.
- 10. Two years later, Plaintiff returned to SMC as an employee. More specifically,

Plaintiff accepted the position of Global Target Account Manager. That position came with more responsibilities than Plaintiff's previous role with the company, and placed a greater emphasis on client interaction and business development.

#### Plaintiff's Role and Performance

- In 2017, Defendant SMC designated Plaintiff to serve as one of two Corporate
   Account Managers for the Cleveland branch.
- 12. In or around April of 2018, the other Corporate Account Manager left SMC and Plaintiff began to serve as the only Corporate Account Manager for the Cleveland branch.
- 13. Plaintiff was a loyal employee and performed his duties well for years and continued to be highly qualified for his position.

#### Defendants' Discriminatory Treatment

- 14. In or around November of 2019, SMC hired a new employee as another Corporate Account Manager within the Cleveland branch. At that time, the new employee was 34 years old. Plaintiff, on the other hand, was 66 years old and was the oldest employee within the Cleveland branch.
- 15. On April 10, 2020, three months before his 67th birthday, while he was working from home in Westlake, OH, Plaintiff received a phone call from Defendant Eric Lundgren. Defendant Lundgren is a Regional Sales Manager for Defendant SMC and his responsibilities include overseeing the Cleveland branch.
- 16. Defendant Lundgren informed Plaintiff that he was being terminated immediately as a result of the economic condition of SMC that he attributed to COVID-19.

- 17. Hours later, two of Defendant SMC's employees went to Plaintiff's home and repossessed his corporate car, cell phone, laptop, gas card and credit card.
- 18. Defendant SMC offered Plaintiff only one week's severance pay upon his termination. It then presented him with a written release agreement providing that if he agreed to release all claims he had against SMC, it would pay him two weeks severance. Plaintiff declined that offer.
- 19. Attached to the written release agreement Defendant SMC provided to Plaintiff was a list of employees who were also being terminated as a result of the alleged economic circumstances caused by COVID-19.
- 20. Of the 28 employees in the Cleveland branch, only Plaintiff, who was the oldest member of the branch, and a Business Development Manager, who, at age 63, was the second oldest person in the Branch, were fired.
- 21. On the list of employees who were not terminated was the 34 year old Corporate

  Account Manager, who had been hired just some five months earlier.

#### UNLAWFUL AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT UNDER R.C. §4112.02

- 22. Plaintiff incorporates all previous allegations.
- 23. Plaintiff was more than 40 years of age at all times relevant to the allegations in this Complaint.
- 24. Plaintiff was qualified for his position and capable of performing his job duties.
- Defendants SMC and Lundgren terminated Plaintiff because of his age on April 10,2020.
- 26. Defendant SMC and Lundgren assigned the duties that formerly belonged to Plaintiff

- to a younger employee or employees.
- 27. Defendants SMC and Lundgren discriminated against Plaintiff because of his age with respect to the terms, conditions and privileges of his employment, including but not limited to terminating his employment in violation of §§ 4112.02 and 4112.99, Ohio Rev. Code.
- 28. As a direct and proximate result of the wrongful conduct of Defendants SMC and Lundgren, Plaintiff suffered and will continue to suffer economic and non-economic harms and damages for which Defendants are liable, including but not limited to emotional pain and suffering, humiliation, embarrassment, loss of enjoyment of life and the loss of past and future wages, fringe benefits and other privileges and conditions of employment.
- 29. Defendants SMC and Lundgren intentionally, willfully, wantonly, recklessly, and maliciously violated Plaintiff's rights under §§ 4112.02 and 4112.99, Ohio Revised Code for which Defendants are liable for punitive damages, attorney's and expert fees, costs, interest, and any equitable relief that this Court deems appropriate.

#### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Plaintiff demands the following relief against Defendants:

- Judgment in his favor awarding compensatory damages, jointly and severally, in excess of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars;
- Judgment in his favor awarding punitive damages, jointly and severally, in excess of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars;
- 3. Judgment in his favor awarding him back pay, front pay, prejudgment interest,

reasonable attorneys' and expert fees, and costs, jointly and severally;

4. Such other further legal and equitable relief to which Plaintiff is entitled.

#### JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all issues within this Complaint.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ J. Michael Murray

J. MICHAEL MURRAY (0019626)
jmmurray@bgmdlaw.com
WILLIAM C. LIVINGSTON (0089538)
wlivingston@bgmdlaw.com
BERKMAN, GORDON, MURRAY & DEVAN
55 Public Square, Suite 2200
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1949
Telephone: (216) 781-5245
Facsimile: (216) 781-8207

Attorneys for Plaintiff

## SUMMONS IN A CORDE A CORDON-02000 PLOS PORCOMMON PLOS PLOS CULVA 15 (2A) COUNT 145 JUST PORCOMMON PLOS PLOS PROPERTIES CLEVELAND, OHIO 44113

CASE NO. CV20937000

D1 CM

SUMMONS NO. 42557682

Rule 4 (B) Ohio

Rules of Civil

MICHAEL SHIELDS

VS

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

PLAINTIFF DEFENDANT

**SUMMONS** 

Procedure

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA C/O CT, ITS STATUTORY AGENT C/O CT CORPORATION SYSTEM, ITS SA 36 PENNSYLVANIA STREET

INDIANAPOLIS IN 46204-0000

Said answer is required to be served on:



Plantiff's Attorney

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON 55 PUBLIC SQ. STE. 2200

CLEVELAND, OH 44113-0000

Case has been assigned to Judge:

DANIEL GAUL

Do not contact judge. Judge's name is given for attorney's reference only.

You have been named defendant in a sums complaint (copy attached hereto) filed in Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas, Cuyahoga County Justice Center, Cleveland, Ohio 44113, by the plaintiff named herein.

You are hereby summoned and required to answer the complaint within 28 days after service of this summons upon you, exclusive of the day of service.

Said answer is required to be served on Plaintiff's Attorney (Address denoted by arrow at left.)

Your answer must also be filed with the court within 3 days after service of said answer on plaintiff's attorney.

If you fail to do so, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

NAILAH K. BYRD Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas

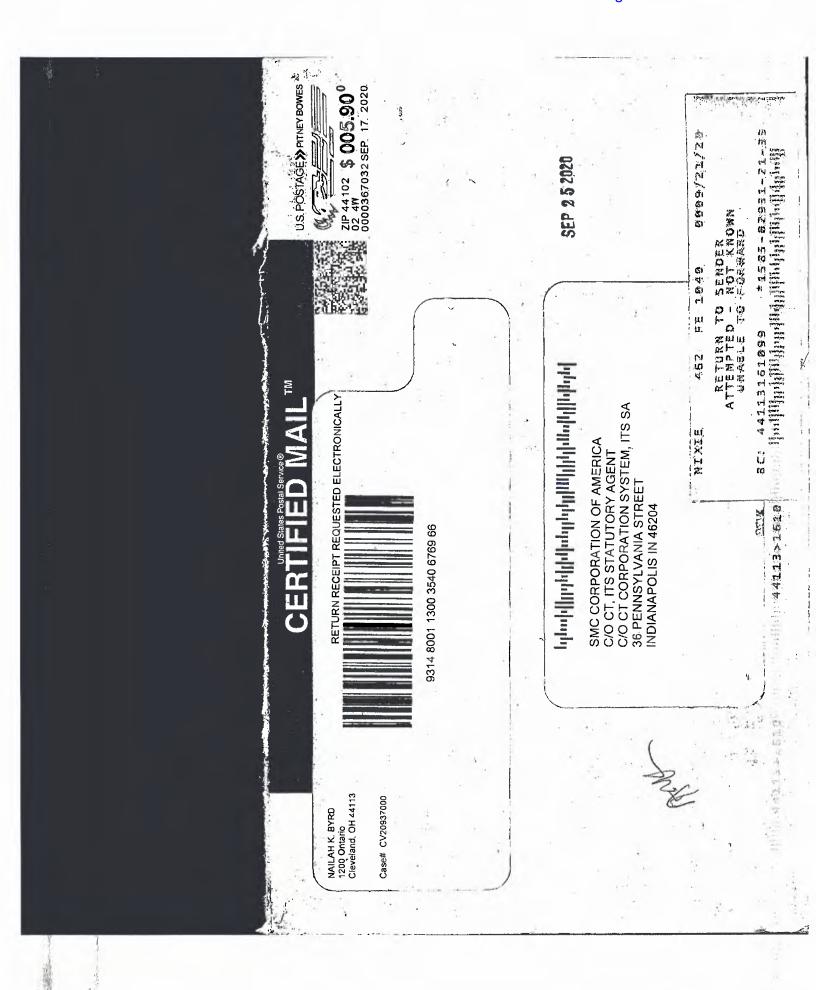
DATE SENT Sep 15, 2020

Ву\_\_\_\_\_

Deputy

COMPLAINT FILED 09/09/2020







#### NAILAH K. BYRD CUYAHOGA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS 1200 Ontario Street Cleveland, Ohio 44113

**Court of Common Pleas** 

PRAECIPE September 21, 2020 10:06

By: WILLIAM LIVINGSTON 0089538

Confirmation Nbr. 2076858

MICHAEL SHIELDS

CV 20 937000

vs.

Judge: DANIEL GAUL

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

Case: 1:20-cv-02348-PAB Doc #: 1-1 Filed: 10/15/20 28 of 45. PageID #: 31



# Common Pleas Court of Cuyahoga County, Ohio Nailah K. Byrd, Clerk of Courts

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE**

MICHAEL SHIELDS	Case Number CV-20-937000
Plaintiff(s)	
	Judge: Daniel Gaul
Vs. SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.	Date: September 21, 2020
Defendants(s)	Date.
Mathadat Camina Bassastada	
Method of Service Requested:	
Certified Mail Service Ordinary Mai	il Service Federal Express Service
Personal Service by the Sheriff of	County
Residence Service by the Sheriff of	County
Personal Service By Process Server	_
Residence Service by Process Server	
Civ.R. 4.7 Waiver Requested	
Name (a) and Address (as) of Doubles to	Samua.
Name(s) and Address(es) of Parties to	Serve:
SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA	
10100 SMC Blvd	
Noblesville, IN 46060	
Additional Instructions:	
Filing Party Name: J. Michael Murray	Supreme Court ID if applicable: 0019626
Phone Number: <u>216-7</u> 81-5245	
X	
For Use by Sheriff or Process Server Only	
ENUMBRIANS PAGY 68/2472020480:06/SERVICE	<del>E / CV 20 93</del> 7000 / Confirmation Nbr. 2076858 / CLBB1
Address for Service if Different from addre	ess included above:



#### NAILAH K. BYRD CUYAHOGA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS 1200 Ontario Street Cleveland, Ohio 44113

**Court of Common Pleas** 

PRAECIPE September 21, 2020 10:06

By: WILLIAM LIVINGSTON 0089538

Confirmation Nbr. 2076858

MICHAEL SHIELDS

CV 20 937000

VS.

Judge: DANIEL GAUL

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.



# NAILAH K. BYRD CUYAHOGA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS 1200 Ontario Street Cleveland, Ohio 44113

#### **Court of Common Pleas**

New Case Electronically Filed: COMPLAINT September 9, 2020 12:38

By: J. MICHAEL MURRAY 0019626

Confirmation Nbr. 2068446

MICHAEL SHIELDS

CV 20 937000

vs.

Judge: DANIEL GAUL

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

#### IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

MICHAEL SHIELDS	) CASE NO.:
23334 S. Melrose Dr.	)
Westlake, Ohio 44145	) JUDGE:
Plaintiff,	)
vs.	)
	) COMPLAINT
SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA	)
c/o CT, its Statutory Agent	) (JURY DEMAND ENDORSED HEREON)
36 Pennsylvania St.	)
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204	)
	)
and	)
	)
ERIC LUNDGREN	)
SMC Corp. of America, Minneapolis Branch	)
6541 City West Parkway Eden	
Prairie, MN 55344	)
Defendants.	)
Doiolidalis.	,

#### INTRODUCTION

1. This is an age discrimination action arising from Defendants' unlawful termination of Plaintiff's employment on April 10, 2020. This action is being brought pursuant to R.C. §4112.02(L).

#### **PARTIES**

2. Plaintiff Michael Shields is 67 years old. Until April 10, 2020, Plaintiff was employed as a Corporate Account Manager in the Cleveland branch of Defendant SMC Corporation of America. Plaintiff was an employee as defined by § 4112.01(A)(3), Ohio Rev. Code.

- 3. Defendant SMC Corporation of America ("SMC") is a for-profit corporation with its principal place of business located at 10100 SMC Boulevard, Noblesville, IN, 46060.

  Defendant SMC is an employer as defined by § 4112.01(A)(2), Ohio Rev. Code.
- 4. Defendant Eric Lundren is an individual and a resident of the State of Minnesota.

  Defendant Lundgren is employed as a Regional Sales Manager by Defendant SMC and is also an employer as defined by § 4112.01(A)(2), Ohio Rev. Code.

#### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

- Defendants transact business in this state and caused injury to Plaintiff in this state.

  This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendants based on, but not limited to,

  Ohio's Long Arm Statute, R.C. § 2307.382(A)(1),(3),(4) and Ohio R. Civ. P.

  4.3(A)(1),(3),(4).
- 6. Plaintiff's claims arose in Cuyahoga County, he resides in Cuyahoga County and Defendants are nonresidents of the State of Ohio. Venue is, therefore, proper in Cuyahoga County.

#### **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

- Defendant SMC is the United States subsidiary of SMC Corporation based in Japan.
   It provides industries with technology and products to support automation.
- 8. In 2005, Plaintiff first began his employment with Defendant SMC as an account manager in its Cleveland branch.
- 9. After six successful years, Plaintiff left Defendant SMC to pursue other opportunities in 2011.
- 10. Two years later, Plaintiff returned to SMC as an employee. More specifically,

Plaintiff accepted the position of Global Target Account Manager. That position came with more responsibilities than Plaintiff's previous role with the company, and placed a greater emphasis on client interaction and business development.

#### Plaintiff's Role and Performance

- In 2017, Defendant SMC designated Plaintiff to serve as one of two Corporate
   Account Managers for the Cleveland branch.
- 12. In or around April of 2018, the other Corporate Account Manager left SMC and Plaintiff began to serve as the only Corporate Account Manager for the Cleveland branch.
- 13. Plaintiff was a loyal employee and performed his duties well for years and continued to be highly qualified for his position.

#### Defendants' Discriminatory Treatment

- 14. In or around November of 2019, SMC hired a new employee as another Corporate Account Manager within the Cleveland branch. At that time, the new employee was 34 years old. Plaintiff, on the other hand, was 66 years old and was the oldest employee within the Cleveland branch.
- 15. On April 10, 2020, three months before his 67th birthday, while he was working from home in Westlake, OH, Plaintiff received a phone call from Defendant Eric Lundgren. Defendant Lundgren is a Regional Sales Manager for Defendant SMC and his responsibilities include overseeing the Cleveland branch.
- 16. Defendant Lundgren informed Plaintiff that he was being terminated immediately as a result of the economic condition of SMC that he attributed to COVID-19.

- 17. Hours later, two of Defendant SMC's employees went to Plaintiff's home and repossessed his corporate car, cell phone, laptop, gas card and credit card.
- 18. Defendant SMC offered Plaintiff only one week's severance pay upon his termination. It then presented him with a written release agreement providing that if he agreed to release all claims he had against SMC, it would pay him two weeks severance. Plaintiff declined that offer.
- 19. Attached to the written release agreement Defendant SMC provided to Plaintiff was a list of employees who were also being terminated as a result of the alleged economic circumstances caused by COVID-19.
- 20. Of the 28 employees in the Cleveland branch, only Plaintiff, who was the oldest member of the branch, and a Business Development Manager, who, at age 63, was the second oldest person in the Branch, were fired.
- 21. On the list of employees who were not terminated was the 34 year old Corporate

  Account Manager, who had been hired just some five months earlier.

#### UNLAWFUL AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT UNDER R.C. §4112.02

- 22. Plaintiff incorporates all previous allegations.
- Plaintiff was more than 40 years of age at all times relevant to the allegations in thisComplaint.
- 24. Plaintiff was qualified for his position and capable of performing his job duties.
- Defendants SMC and Lundgren terminated Plaintiff because of his age on April 10,2020.
- 26. Defendant SMC and Lundgren assigned the duties that formerly belonged to Plaintiff

- to a younger employee or employees.
- 27. Defendants SMC and Lundgren discriminated against Plaintiff because of his age with respect to the terms, conditions and privileges of his employment, including but not limited to terminating his employment in violation of §§ 4112.02 and 4112.99, Ohio Rev. Code.
- As a direct and proximate result of the wrongful conduct of Defendants SMC and Lundgren, Plaintiff suffered and will continue to suffer economic and non-economic harms and damages for which Defendants are liable, including but not limited to emotional pain and suffering, humiliation, embarrassment, loss of enjoyment of life and the loss of past and future wages, fringe benefits and other privileges and conditions of employment.
- 29. Defendants SMC and Lundgren intentionally, willfully, wantonly, recklessly, and maliciously violated Plaintiff's rights under §§ 4112.02 and 4112.99, Ohio Revised Code for which Defendants are liable for punitive damages, attorney's and expert fees, costs, interest, and any equitable relief that this Court deems appropriate.

#### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Plaintiff demands the following relief against Defendants:

- Judgment in his favor awarding compensatory damages, jointly and severally, in excess of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars;
- Judgment in his favor awarding punitive damages, jointly and severally, in excess of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars;
- 3. Judgment in his favor awarding him back pay, front pay, prejudgment interest,

reasonable attorneys' and expert fees, and costs, jointly and severally;

4. Such other further legal and equitable relief to which Plaintiff is entitled.

#### **JURY DEMAND**

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all issues within this Complaint.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ J. Michael Murray

J. MICHAEL MURRAY (0019626)
jmmurray@bgmdlaw.com
WILLIAM C. LIVINGSTON (0089538)
wlivingston@bgmdlaw.com
BERKMAN, GORDON, MURRAY & DEVAN
55 Public Square, Suite 2200
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1949
Telephone: (216) 781-5245

Telephone: (216) 781-5245 Facsimile: (216) 781-8207

Attorneys for Plaintiff

#### SUMMONS IN A COUSE ACTION - 026 OR POPCOMMON PLIE BE CUYAM 6/20 COUNT 45 JUST DETOCHNATOR

CASE NO. CV20937000

D1 CM

SUMMONS NO. 42599423

CLEVELAND, OHIO 44113

Rule 4 (B) Ohio

Rules of Civil Procedure

MICHAEL SHIELDS

VS

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

DEFENDANT

PLAINTIFF

**SUMMONS** 

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA C/O CT, ITS STATUTORY AGENT 10100 SMC BLVD NOBLESVILLE IN 46060-0000

Said answer is required to be served on:



Plantiff's Attorney

WILLÏAM LIVINGSTON 55 PUBLIC SQ. STE. 2200

CLEVELAND, OH 44113-0000

Case has been assigned to Judge:

DANIEL GAUL

Do not contact judge. Judge's name is given for attorney's reference only.

You have been named defendant in a sums complaint (copy attached hereto) filed in Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas, Cuyahoga County Justice Center, Cleveland, Ohio 44113, by the plaintiff named herein.

You are hereby summoned and required to answer the complaint within 28 days after service of this summons upon you, exclusive of the day of service.

Said answer is required to be served on Plaintiff's Attorney (Address denoted by arrow at left.)

Your answer must also be filed with the court within 3 days after service of said answer on plaintiff's attorney.

If you fail to do so, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

PLEAS COUNTY OF A COUNTY OF A

NAILAH K. BYRD Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas

Betty M. Bujant

DATE SENT Sep 21, 2020

Deputy

By.

COMPLAINT FILED 09/09/2020



Case: 1:20-cv-02348-PAB Doc #: 1-1 Filed: 10/15/20 38 of 45. PageID #: 41



Date Produced: 10/05/2020

**CERTIFIED MAIL SOLUTIONS INC.:** 

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#### NAILAH K. BYRD CUYAHOGA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS 1200 Ontario Street Cleveland, Ohio 44113

**Court of Common Pleas** 

NOTICE OF APPEARANCE October 1, 2020 15:03

By: GREGORY GUERVARA 0067269

Confirmation Nbr. 2085746

MICHAEL SHIELDS

CV 20 937000

vs.

Judge: DANIEL GAUL

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

## IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

MICHAEL SHIELDS,	)
Plaintiff,	) )
v.	) CASE NO. CV20937000
SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA and ERIC LUNDGREN,	) ) )
Defendants.	)

#### <u>APPEARANCE</u>

To the Clerk of this Court and all parties of record:

Please enter my appearance as counsel in this case for **Defendants**, **SMC Corporation** of America and Eric Lundgren.

I certify that I am admitted to practice in this Court.

September 29, 2020 /s/ Gregory W. Guevara
Gregory W. Guevara (IN #16728-49)

BOSE McKINNEY & EVANS LLP 111 Monument Circle, Suite 2700 Indianapolis, IN 46204 (317) 684-5000; (317) 684-5173 Fax

 $\underline{GGuevara@boselaw.com}$ 

Attorney for Defendants, SMC Corporation of America and Eric Lundgren

#### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on September 29, 2020, a copy of the foregoing "Appearance" was filed electronically. Notice of this filing will be sent to the following counsel by operation of the Court's electronic filing system. Parties may access this filing through the Court's system.

J. Michael Murray, Esq.
William C. Livingston, Esq.
Berkman, Gordon, Murray & Devan
55 Public Square, Suite 2200
Cleveland, OH 44113-1949
jmmurray@bgmdlaw.com
wlivingston@bgmdlaw.com

/s/ Gregory W. Guevara
Gregory W. Guevara

3935119

Motion No. 4890253



#### NAILAH K. BYRD CUYAHOGA COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS 1200 Ontario Street Cleveland, Ohio 44113

**Court of Common Pleas** 

MOTION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME October 5, 2020 11:50

By: GREGORY GUERVARA 0067269

Confirmation Nbr. 2087299

MICHAEL SHIELDS CV 20 937000

vs.

Judge: DANIEL GAUL SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL.

## IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

MICHAEL SHIELDS,	)
Plaintiff,	)
v.	) CASE NO. CV20937000
SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA and ERIC LUNDGREN,	)
Defendants.	)

#### **DEFENDANTS' CONSENTED MOTION FOR ENLARGEMENT OF TIME**

Pursuant to Rule 8.0(C) of the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Local Rules, Defendants, SMC Corporation of America and Eric Lundgren, by counsel, respectfully move the Court for a 30-day enlargement of time to file an answer or other response to the Complaint filed by Plaintiff, Michael Shields. In support of this motion, Defendants state:

- 1. Plaintiff initiated this action with the filing of his Complaint on September 9, 2020.
- 2. Defendants were served with the summons and Complaint on September 15, 2020, resulting in a deadline for Defendants to answer or otherwise respond to the Complaint by October 13, 2020, which time has not yet expired.
- 3. Defendants reasonably require additional time to investigate and respond to the allegations in the Complaint.
  - 4. No prior enlargements of time have been requested by or granted to Defendants.
- 5. On October 5, 2020, counsel for Defendants contacted counsel for Plaintiff, to request consent to the enlargement of time which is the subject of this motion. Plaintiff consents to the enlargement of time.

6. This motion is not made for purposes of unnecessary delay or other improper purpose.

WHEREFORE, Defendants, SMC Corporation of America and Eric Lundgren, by counsel, respectfully request that the Court grant Defendants a 30-day enlargement of time, to and including November 12, 2020, in which to answer or otherwise respond to Plaintiff's Complaint and for all other appropriate relief.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Gregory W. Guevara
Gregory W. Guevara (OH #0067269)
BOSE McKINNEY & EVANS LLP
111 Monument Circle, Suite 2700
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 684-5000; (317) 684-5173 Fax
GGuevara@boselaw.com

Attorney for Defendants, SMC Corporation of America and Eric Lundgren

#### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on October 5, 2020, a copy of the foregoing "Defendants' Consented Motion for Enlargement of Time" was filed electronically. Notice of this filing will be sent to the following counsel by operation of the Court's electronic filing system. Parties may access this filing through the Court's system.

J. Michael Murray, Esq.
William C. Livingston, Esq.
Berkman, Gordon, Murray & Devan
55 Public Square, Suite 2200
Cleveland, OH 44113-1949
jmmurray@bgmdlaw.com
wlivingston@bgmdlaw.com

/s/ Gregory W. Guevara
Gregory W. Guevara

3938807

Case: 1:20-cv-02348-PAB Doc #: 1-1 Filed: 10/15/20 45 of 45. PageID #: 48



### IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS **CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO**

MICHAEL SHIELDS Plaintiff

Case No: CV-20-937000

Judge: DANIEL GAUL

SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA, ET AL. Defendant

JOURNAL ENTRY

DEFENDANTS' CONSENTED MOTION FOR ENLARGEMENT OF TIME, FILED 10/05/2020, IS GRANTED. DEFENDANTS SHALL MOVE, ANSWER, OR OTHERWISE PLEAD TO PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT ON OR BEFORE 11/12/2020.

CMC BY PHONE SET FOR 11/17/2020 AT 10:45 AM. PLAINTIFF'S COUNSEL SHALL INITIATE THE CONFERENCE CALL WITH ALL OTHER PARTIES AND CONTACT THE COURT AT THE SET TIME. THE COURT'S STAFF ATTORNEY CAN BE REACHED AT (216) 443-8619. PARTIES SHALL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS DISCOVERY PROGRESS AND SCHEDULING MATTERS, ETC.